Financial Irregularity

903. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in order to meet financial year-end targets of funds disbursements to States, his Ministry has released huge amounts of money in March this year admitting subsequently that this was not a good practice;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour and Welfare has confronted the decision and some States are lagging behind in the implementation of projects for tribal development and submission of assessment reports; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken by Government not to repeat such action and expending reports?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JUAL ORAM): (a) Delay in the release of funds to States/U.Ts. under various schemes and programmes occurred mainly due to late submission of proposals by the States/U.Ts complete in all respects with Utilisation Certificates in respect of earlier releases.

(b) The Standing Committee on Labour and Welfare has desired that the Ministry should strengthen its co- ordination and monitoring with the States by conducting regular visits/inspections and should plan and incur expenditure in a phased manner so as to avoid accumulations towards the fag end of the financial year.

(c) The need for timely submission of proposals complete in all respects accompanied by Utilisation Certificate has been impressed upon the State Government/UTs. Senior officers of the Ministry are visiting the States to expedite submission of proposals, so that timely release of funds could be effected. A meeting of the State Secretaries of Tribal Welfare was also convened on 17.5.2000 in New Delhi wherein the States/ U.Ts. were advised to ensure timely submission of proposals. The matter is being followed-up with States/ U.Ts. so that funds are released in a phased manner.

Closure of Tribe Shop of TRIFED

904. VEN'BLE DHAMMAVIRIYO: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether tribe shop of TRIFED is going to be closed by Government; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JUAL ORAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

Move of Andhra Pradesh Government to Amend Land Transfer Regulation Act

905. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether tribals of Visakhapatnam and East and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh are opposing move of the Andhra Pradesh Government to amend Land Transfer Regulation Act for mining in the scheduled areas; and

(b) the action taken to assist tribals in their tribal rights and against endangering their tribal life-style and ecosystems?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JUAL ORAM): (a) and (b) The Ministry has received a few representations on the subject. The Ministry has also circulated the relevant extracts of the Hon'ble Supreme Court's judgement to the State Governments on the issue and has requested them to abide by the judgement in letter and spirit.

Tribals Status to Gaddies and Gujjars of Himachal Pradesh

906. SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been requested top grant tribal status to the Gaddies and Gujjars of the merged areas Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any action has since been taken on these requests, so far; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JUAL ORAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Requests have been received from various quarters for grant of Scheduled Tribe status of Gaddies and Gujjars of the areas merged with Himachal Pradesh on account of reorganization of State of Punjab in 1966.